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Q. Aureli Symmachi
Relatio III

Introduction, Translation and Notes

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Q. AURELI SYMMACHI
RELATIO III
INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION AND NOTES

BY

KATHARINE RANDALL TENER

THESIS

FOR THE

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

IN

LATIN

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

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INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION AND NOTES

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DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN LATIN

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Q. Aureli Symmachi

Relatio III*

DDDNNN. Ualentiniano Theodosio et Arcadio semper Auggg.

Symmachus u. c. praefectus urbis.

- 1 Ubi primum senatus amplissimus semperque uester subiecta legibus uitia cognouit et a principibus piis uidit purgari famam temporum proximorum, boni saeculi auctoritatem secutus euomuit diu pressum dolorem atque iterum me querelarum suarum iussit esse legatum. cui ideo diui principis denegata est ab improbis audientia,
- 2 quia non erat iustitia defutura, dddnnn. imperatores. gemino igitur functus officio et ut praefectus uester gesta publica persequor et ut legatus ciuium mandata commendo. nulla est hic dissensio uoluntatum, quia iam credere homines desierunt aulicorum se studia praestare, si discrepent. amari coli diligere maius imperio est. quis ferat obfuisse rei publicae priuata certamina? merito illos senatus insequitur, qui potentiam suam famae principis praetulerunt. noster autem labor pro clementia uestra ducit excubias. cui enim magis commodat quod instituta maiorum quod patriae iura et fata defendimus quam temporum gloriae? quae tunc maior est, cum uobis contra morem parentum intellegitis
- 3 nil licere. repetimus igitur religionum statum qui rei publicae diu profuit. certe dinumerentur principes utriusque sectae utriusque sententiae: pars eorum prior cerimonias patrum coluit, recentior non remouit. si exemplum non facit religio ueterum, faciat dissimulatio proximorum. quis igitur ita familiaris est barbaris, ut aram Uictoriae non requirat? cauti in posterum

* Text, Meyer, Leipzig, 1872.

sumus et aliarum rerum ostenta uitamus. reddatur saltem nomini
honor, qui numini denegatus est. multa Victoriae debet aeter-
nitas uestra et adhuc plura debebit. auersentur hanc potestatem,
quibus nihil profuit. uos amicum triumphis patrociniū nolite
deserere. cunctis potentia uotiuā est ista. nemo colendam ne-
4 get, quam profitetur optandam. quod si huius ominis non esset
iusta uitatio, ornamentis saltem curiae decuit abstineri. prae-
state, oro uos, ut ea, quae pueri suscepimus, senes posteris re-
linquamus. consuetudinis amor magnus est. merito diui Con-
stantii factum diu non stetit. omnia uobis exempla uitanda sunt,
quae mox remota didicistis, aeternitatem curamus famae et nominis
5 uestri, ne quid futura aetas inueniat corrigendum. ubi in leges
uestras et uerba iurabimus? qua religione mens falsa terrebi-
tur, ne in testimoniis mentiatur? omnia quidem deo plena sunt
nec ullus perfidis tutus est locus, sed plurimum ualet ad metum
delinquendi etiam praesentia numinis urgueri. illa ara concor-
diam tenet omnium, illa ara fidem conuenit singulorum, neque aliud
magis auctoritatem facit sententiis, quam quod omnia quasi iuratus
ordo decernit. patebit ergo sedes profana periuris et hoc in-
6 clyti principes mei probabile iudicabunt, qui sacramento publico
tuti sunt? sed diuus Constantius idem fecisse dicetur. cetera
potius illius principis aemulemur, qui nihil tale esset aggressus,
si quis ante se alius deuiasset. corrigit enim sequentem lap-
sus prioris et de reprehensione antecedentis exempli nascitur e-
mendatio. fas fuit, ut parens ille clementiae uestrae in re ad-
huc noua non caueret inuidiam. num potest etiam nobis eadem de-
fensio conuenire, si imitemur quod meminimus improbatum? ac-
7 cipiat aeternitas uestra alia eiusdem principis facta, quae in

usum dignius trahat. nihil illo decerpsit sacrarum uirginum
priuilegiis, decreuit nobilibus sacerdotia, Romanis cerimoniis non
negauit inpensas et per omnes uias aeternae urbis laetum secutus
senatum uidit placido ore delubra, uidit inscripta fastigiis deum
nomina, percontatus templorum origines est, miratus est conditores,
8 cumque alias religiones sequeretur, has seruauit imperio. suos
enim cuique mos, suos ritus est. uarios custodes urbibus cultus
mens diuina distribuit. ut animae nascentibus, ita populis fa-
tales genii diuiduntur. accedit utilitas, quae maxime homini
deos asserit. nam cum ratio omnis in operto sit, unde rectius
quam de memoria atque documentis rerum secundarum cognitio uenit
numinum? iam si longa aetas auctoritatem religionibus faciat,
seruanda est tot saeculis fides, et sequendi sunt nobis parentes,
9 qui secuti sunt feliciter suos. Romam nunc putemus assistere
atque his uobiscum agere sermonibus: Optimi principum, patres
patriae, reueremini annos meos, in quos me pius ritus adduxit;
utar cerimoniis auitis; neque enim penitet. uiuam meo more,
quia libera sum. hic cultus in leges meas orbem redegit, haec
sacra Hannibalem a moenibus a Capitolio Senonas repulerunt. ad
10 hoc ergo seruata sum, ut longaeua reprehendar? uidero, quale
sit, quod instituendum putatur. sera autem et contumeliosa est
emendatio senectutis. ergo diis patriis diis indigetibus pacem
rogamus. aequum est, quicquid omnes colunt, unum putari. eadem
spectamus astra, commune caelum est, idem nos mundus inuoluit.
quid interest, qua quisque prudentia uerum requirat? uno itinere
non protest perueniri ad tam grande secretum. sed otiosorum dis-
11 putatio est haec. nunc preces non certamen afferimus. quanto

commodo sacri aerarii uestri Uestaliū uirginū praerogatiua detracta est? sub largissimis imperatoribus donegetur, quod parcissimi praestiterunt. honor solus est in illo ueluti stipendio castitatis. ut uitae earum capiti decus faciunt, ita insigne ducitur sacerdotii uacare muneribus. nudum quoddam nomen immunitatis requirunt, quoniam paupertate a dispendio tutae sunt. itaque amplius laudi earum tribuunt, qui aliquid rei detrahunt. siquidem saluti publicae dicata uirginitas crescit merito, cum caret praemio. absint ab aerarii uestri puritate ista compendia. fiscus bonorum principum non sacerdotum dampnis, sed hostium spoliis augeatur. illud tenue lucrum compensat inuidiam? atqui auaritia in mores uestros non cadit. hoc miseriores sunt, quibus subsidia uetera decerpta sunt. etenim sub imperatoribus, qui alieno abstinent, quia resistunt cupiditati, ad solam detrahitur amittentis iniuriam, quod desiderium non mouet auferentis. agros etiam uirginibus et ministris deficientium uoluntate legatos fiscus retentat. oro uos, iustitiae sacerdotes, ut urbis uestrae sacris reddatur priuata successio. dictent testamenta securi et sciant sub principibus non auaris stabile esse, quod scripserint. delectet uos ista felicitas generis humani. coepit causae huius exemplum sollicitare morientes. ergo Romanae religiones ad Romana iura non pertinent? quod nomen accipiet ablatio facultatum, quas nulla lex nullus casus fecit caducas? capiunt legata liberti, seruis testamentorum iusta commoda non negantur. tantum nobiles uirgines et fatalium sacrorum ministri excludentur praediis hereditate quaesitis? quid iuuat saluti publicae castum corpus dicare et imperii aeternitatem caelestibus fulcire praesidiis, armis uestris aquilis uestris amicas applicare

uirtutes, pro omnibus efficacia uota suscipere, et ius cum omnibus non habere? itane melior est seruitus, quae hominibus im-
penditur? rem publicam laedimus, cui numquam expedit, ut in-
grata sit. nemo me putet tueri solam causam religionum. ex
huius modi facinoribus orta sunt cuncta Romani generis incommoda.
honorauerat lex parentum Vestales uirgines ac ministros deorum
uictu modico iustisque priuilegiis. stetit muneris huius inte-
gritas usque ad degeneres trapezitas, qui ad mercedem uilium
baiulorum sacra castitatis alimenta uerterunt. secuta est hoc
factum fames publica et spem prouinciarum omnium messis aegra
decepit. non sunt haec uitia terrarum, nihil imputemus austris.
nec rubigo segetibus obfuit, nec auena fruges necauit. sacrile-
gio annus exaruit. necesse enim fuit perire hominibus, quod re-
ligionibus negabatur. certe si est huius mali aliquod exemplum,
imputemus tantam famem uicibus annorum. grauis hanc sterilita-
tem causa contraxit. siluestribus arbustis uita producitur et
rursus ad Dodonaeas arbores plebis rusticae inopia conuolauit.
quid tale prouinciae pertulerunt, cum religionum ministros honor
publicus pasceret? quando in usum hominum concussa quercus, quan-
do uulsae sunt herbarum radices, quando alternos regionum defec-
tus deseruit fecunditas mutua, cum populo et uiginibus sacris
communis esset annona? commendabat enim terrarum prouentum uictus
antistitum et remedium magis quam largitas erat. an dubium est,
semper pro copia omnium datum, quod nunc inopia omnium uindicauit?
dicet aliquis sumptum publicum denegatum alienae religionis impen-
diis. absit a bonis principibus ista sententia, ut, quod olim
de communi quibusdam tributum est, in iure fisci esse uideatur.
nam cum res publica de singulis constet, quod ab ea profiscitur,

fit rursus proprium singulorum. omnia regitis, sed suum cuique
seruatis, plusque apud uos iustitia quam licentia ualet. con-
sulite certe munificentiam uestram, an adhuc publica uelit exis-
timari quae in alios transtulistis. semel honori urbis delata
compendia desinunt esse tribuentium, et quod a principio benefi-
19 cium fuit usu atque aetate fit debitum. inanem igitur metum
diuino animo uestro temptat incutere, si quis asserit conscientiam
uos habere praebentium, nisi detrahentium subieritis inuidiam.
faueant clementiae uestrae sectarum omnium arcana praesidia et
haec maxime, quae maiores uestros aliquando iuuerunt, uos defen-
dant, a nobis colantur. eum religionum statum petimus, qui diuo
20 parenti numinis uestri seruauit imperium, qui fortunato principi
legitimos suffecit heredes. spectat senior ille diuus ex arce
siderea lacrimas sacerdotum et se culpatum putat more uiolato,
quem libenter ipse seruauit. praestate etiam diuo fratri uestro
alieni consilii correctionem, tegite factum, quod senatui dis-
plicuisse nesciuit. siquidem constat ideo exclusam legationem,
ne ad eum iudicium publicum perueniret. pro existimatione est
temporum superiorum, ut non dubitetus abolere, quod probandum est
principis non fuisse.

INTRODUCTION

Long-established institutions do not die without a struggle and their last defenders are almost as noteworthy as their founders. Paganism held supremacy for many hundreds of years and when Christianity arose to take its place, it yielded only after a fierce struggle. It was during the fourth century of our era that the last important contest was waged and the last and most ardent champion of paganism was Quintus Aurelius Symmachus. The life of Rome in the fourth century is full of interest, and we must remember that "Rome" did not exist merely in the time of Caesar and Cicero. The centuries that followed were outgrowths of that golden age and are of vast significance for modern times. Foremost among the events of that period is the growth of Christianity. Hand in hand with this development went the decline of paganism, and its last brave efforts to survive deserve our careful study.

Q. Aurelius Symmachus was a contemporary of Jerome and Ambrose, of Ausonius, Prudentius, and Claudian. Although he was one of the nobility, his family cannot be traced further back than the time of Constantine. The first recorded instance of the name is the mention of his grandfather, Aurelius Iulianus Symmachus who was consul in 330. His son was Lucius Aurelius Avianus Symmachus who married a woman of a noted family. One of their children was Symmachus, the orator and statesman. Avianus, himself, was described by Ammianus as one of the most conspicuous examples of learning and modesty. He was a praetor in Rome, pontifex maior, prefect of the city, consul, and his opinion was asked first, in the senate.

1. Amm. Marc. XXVII 3, 3.

2. C.I.L. VI 1698

Like his son, he was a firm believer in the ancient religion. An interesting story is told of his private life. A plebian spread the rumor that Avianius had said he would slake lime with his wine rather than sell at the price demanded. Aroused by this report, the populace burned his beautiful house, situated across the Tiber, and Avianius withdrew to the country. To make amends, the senate bestowed an honor, never before given to a private person---Avianius was petitioned to return to the city. The occasion gave rise to an oration on the part of his son, and another was delivered when his father was chosen consul.

Q. Aurelius Symmachus was born about 340 and received the ordinary education of a Roman gentleman. In his library were the Annals of Livy, Gallic War of Caesar, Natural History of Pliny, several works of Cicero, Varro, Valerius Maximus, Terence, Plautus, Horace and Vergil.¹ Pliny, the younger, was his especial favorite, and Macrobius, in his Saturnalia,² speaks of the two together as writing in a style, "pingue et floridum".

On the statue erected to Symmachus by his son, his many public offices are enumerated. Early in his public career, he was appointed by the senate to carry an offering of gold and deliver a panegyric to Valentinian I at the time of his Quinquennalia in 369. He was proconsul of Africa when the Moors were in revolt. In 383, Symmachus became prefect of the city. It was while he held this office that the third relatio was delivered and the Christian plot against him failed. Praetextatus, the friend of Symmachus, had procured an imperial decree by which the prefect of the city was ordered to restore temple property. Elated by this success, the

1. Seeck - De Symmachi Vita XLV.

2. Macrobius - Sat. V. 1, 7.

pagans tried to do more and sent Symmachus to the emperor to ask for the restoration of the altar of Victory and other pagan privileges which Gratian had removed. He was unsuccessful, however. Then the Christians accused Symmachus of torturing Christian priests. This called forth imperial censure, but Symmachus cleared himself, and he and Praetextatus retained the favor of the emperor. Later that year, Symmachus lost a close friend and the pagans a valuable champion, in the death of Praetextatus. His enemies increased and Symmachus withdrew from office in 385, though he was still regarded as the leading man of the senate. In 387, he delivered a panegyric in praise of Maximus, the usurper, and as a result was accused of treason. He fled to the church for protection and was pardoned by Theodosius who made him consul in 391. He again sought to restore the altar of Victory, and Theodosius, in a rage, banished him a hundred miles from Milan. The account says he was forced to ride in a carriage without cushions. Symmachus was in danger again when another rebellion occurred in Africa. War with the Moors would shut off the corn supply from Rome and cause riots. In order to prevent unpopularity falling upon the emperor, the senate was forced to make the declaration of war. Symmachus had to bear the brunt of ill-will but it soon disappeared and his closing days were spent in peace. He died probably in 403.

In private life, Symmachus was a representative of the Roman nobility, a gentleman in the best sense of the word. His letters are an important source for our knowledge of the life of the times, and of his own character, although his son, who edited and published his father's writings, carefully expurgated any com-

promising statements. These might, however, have been most enlightening. Symmachus was an extremely wealthy man for he held the offices of quaestor and praetor which were a right of birth. All senators held them, if rich. The family property included a house in Capua, three houses in the city, fifteen villas, and three farms, and others which are not mentioned in the letters.¹ Symmachus married Rusticiana, the daughter of Memmius Vitrasius Orfitus, and she brought him a rich dowry. They had a son Fabius Memmius Symmachus and a daughter whose name is unknown, but who married Virius Nichomachus Flavianus, the younger.

In the letters, we find affection for his father, but very little mention made of his wife. There are many letters sent to his daughter, urging her to be careful of her health. He was even more devoted to his son, and personally looked after his health and education. He was greatly interested in the games Fabius gave as praetor, for Symmachus disapproved of the neglect of any ancient custom. Though he was opposed to lavish expenditure in these games, he was willing to overlook extravagance on the part of his son, for he is said to have spent 80,000 pounds on Fabius's praetorian games, purchasing Spanish horses, bears, antelopes, crocodiles, and silk robes and ornaments. Symmachus was also greatly interested in the marriage of his son to the granddaughter of Virius Nichomachus Flavianus. Friendships were a large part of his life. One of his most intimate friends, previously mentioned, was Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, a most eminent pagan, a scholar, philosopher, and mystic. Others of his friends were Stilicho and Bauto, barbarian soldiers, Ausonius, the poet, and Ambrosius, bishop of Milan, both Christians.

1. Seeck - De Symmachi Vita - XLV--XLVI.

As to character, he seems to have had a narrow range of interests, and no extraordinary mental ability. Rome had become a provincial town, no longer the seat of government, and it lived on its past history. He was even more conservative than his fellow-citizens. In one of his own letters, he says there is nothing better for him to follow than "sometimes patching up his health, often¹ avoiding disturbances and always loving literature". Although these interests were not strenuous, he was honored and respected by both Christian and pagan.

Symmachus was accounted in his own time a great orator and writer. But his chief, direct influence on history was his recommendation of Saint Augustine as a professor of rhetoric for the city of Milan. His reputation for eloquence was spread throughout all Italy.² Prosper Aquitanicus said Symmachus was skilled in excellent eloquence and wisdom, although he was a pagan.³ Prudentius, the poet, called Symmachus -- a fluent tongue, from the marvelous fountain of words, an ornament of Roman eloquence!⁴ Emperors and fellow-countrymen alike esteemed him. The people considered him the chief man of the senate even when he had withdrawn from public life, and he was popular because of his honesty and amiability. He is now known as a champion of paganism rather than as an orator, but his third oration which is his pagan plea, delivered in 384, has been⁵ ranked by Angelus Politianus in the list of long-enduring orations. Symmachus is enjoyed by lovers of antiquity, for he gives us a picture of his times which cannot be obtained elsewhere, and his loyal-

1. Liber IV. 44 - Quid enim magis adsectandum est mihi, sarcienti nonnumquam valetudinem, declinanti saepe turbas, litterarum semper innocentiam diligenti?

2. Seeck - LVII.

3. De Promissionibus Dei, parte III.

4. Lib. I. contra Symmachum

5. Migne, J. P. -- Vita Symmachi exantiquissima Editione.

ty to paganism is admirable, even though his love of the past seems exaggerated. Any Latin orator would find difficulty in living through the centuries after Cicero's fame, but Symmachus was truly an orator, a man who knew and utilized his art.

Sources

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C. I. L. VI 1698.

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Q. Aureli Symmachi

Relatio III

Translation

Symmachus u.e.p.u. to our most revered masters, Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius.

When first the most honorable senate, and ever devoted to you, recognized that wrongs have been removed by laws, and saw that the evil reputation of recent times was being cleared away by righteous rulers, following the authority of a good age, and casting out the grief long endured, for the second time, it ordered me to be the ambassador of their complaints, me, to whom, gracious rulers, a hearing was denied by unprincipled men, because justice would have been done, had it been granted. Therefore, performing a twofold office, both as your prefect, performing my public duties, and as an ambassador, I commend to you the desires of my fellow-citizens. Here there is no disagreement of desires, because already men have ceased to believe that they show zeal for the court, if they disagree. To be loved, to be cherished, to be highly esteemed, is greater than power. Who can endure the fact that private interests have injured the state? The senate properly censures those who place their own power before the reputation of the emperor, but in proportion to your kindness, we keep watch over it. For what is it more fitting that we defend the institutions of our ancestors and the laws and destiny of our fatherland than for the glory of our times? This then is greater, since you know that you may do nothing contrary to the custom of our fathers.

We seek, therefore, the religious status which has for a long time helped the state. Surely the chiefs favoring each sect and each opinion ought to be considered. Those of an earlier day cherished the rites of our fathers, the more recent did not reject

them. If the religion of the earlier ones does not furnish an example, the pretense of recent rulers should. Who, then, is so like the barbarians that he does not seek the altar of Victory? We are careful for the future and we avoid a display of new things. Let honor be restored to the name, at least, which is denied the goddess. Your immortality owes much to Victory and in the future will owe yet more. Let them reject this power for whom it avails nothing. Do not desert the protection which is friendly to your triumphs. This is the power desired by all. No one denies that that should be cherished which it is acknowledged should be desired. But if the avoidance of the effect of this omen is not proper, at least you should preserve the ornaments of the senate house. I beg of you, see to it, that those things which as boys we received, as old men, we shall leave to posterity.

Great is the force of custom. It was right that the decree of the divine Constantius did not long endure. All action must be avoided which you have learned cannot be persisted in. We are zealous for the immortality of your reputation and name lest future time find something that is a blemish. Where shall we swear fealty to you? By what religion will the false tongue be terrified so it shall not commit perjury? To be sure, all places are full of God, nor is any safe for perjurers, but the presence of the god is of great value in restraining wrong doing. That altar represents the agreement of all, that altar befits the faith of individuals, nor does anything give more authority to our opinions than the fact that the senatorial order determines everything as if on oath: Shall, then, that place be open to perjury and will my illustrious chiefs, who are safe by the public oath of the senate, judge this to



be right?

But the divine Constantius is said to have done the same. Let us rather emulate other acts of that emperor, who would have set out on no such undertaking, if any other before him had gone astray. For the mistake of one corrects another who is following, and improvement is born from condemnation of the previous action. It was right that that parent of your kindness, in things yet new, had no care for unpopularity. The same defense cannot be ours, can it, if we imitate what we remember has been disapproved? Let your enduring reputation rest on the other acts of that same chief, which he more worthily performed. He detracted nothing from the privileges of the Vestal virgins, he bestowed priesthoods on the nobles, he did not refuse the Romans the cost of the ceremonies, and following the joyful senate through all the streets of the eternal city, he looked on the shrines with a calm countenance, saw the names of the gods graven on the pediments, inquired as to the origins of the temples, marveled at the founders, and although he had another creed, preserved these by his command. For each one has his own custom, his own religious rites. Various forms of religion, the divine mind has distributed as guards to the cities. As the breath of life to living things, so to peoples are divided the "genii", decreed by fate. And utility is a large factor in determining the gods men shall serve. For when no conclusion can be reached by reason, from what better source than from the memory and evidence of prosperity does the knowledge of the gods come? If a long time gives authority to religion, its reliability should be preserved because of its antiquity, and we ought to follow our parents, who happily followed theirs.

Now let us imagine Rome standing by and speaking to you

in these words, "Great chiefs, fathers of our country, reverence my years, to which a blameless ritual has brought me; let me use the ancestral rituals, nor am I ashamed of them. Let me live in my own way because I am free. This religion brought the whole world under my sway. These sacred rites drove Hannibal from our walls and the Sennones from the capitol. Have I been preserved, then, for this, that in my old age I should be restrained? I will see what sort this is which some men say ought to be established. Yet change for old age is slow and full of reproaches. Therefore we ask safety for the gods of our fathers and our deified heroes." It is right, that whatever all cherish should be considered one. We see the same stars, the sky is common, the same world is ours. What does it matter, by what knowledge each one comes to the truth? By only one path, we cannot arrive at so vast a secret.

But this discussion is for those who have leisure. Now we offer prayers, not arguments. How much gain is it to your sacred treasury to have taken away the rights of the Vestal virgins? Should this be denied under the most liberal emperors which the most penurious have established? The only honor is in that tribute to purity, as it were. As the chaplets make an ornament for their heads, it is thought to be an honor of priesthood to be free from civil duties. They seek merely the bare name of immunity, since they are free from taxes by virtue of their poverty and so they attribute more to their praise, who take away some of their property, since virginity, dedicated to the public safety, deservedly increases in reputation when it is free from reward. Let these profits be absent from the purity of your treasury. Let the private purse of good emperors not be augmented by losses of the

priests but by the spoils of the enemy. Does that small gain compensate for unpopularity? Avarice is not in keeping with your character. For this reason they are more wretched from whom their old support has been taken. For under emperors who keep their hands off of another's property because they resist gratification, attention is drawn to the sole wrong of those losing, because the desire of possessing by force is increased. The private purse reserves fields for the virgins and their servants, bequeathed by the wish of those dying. I beg of you, priests of justice, that the right of private inheritance be returned to the sacred institutions of your city. Let them make their wills with a feeling of security and know that what they shall have written is permanent under chiefs who are not greedy. Let that happiness of the human race delight you. Instances of this kind begin to trouble those dying. Do then Roman religions not have the protection of Roman laws? What name will the taking away of these privileges receive, privileges which no law and no misfortune ever made inoperative? Freedmen receive legacies; just bequests in legacies are not denied to slaves. Only the noble Vestal virgins and the servants of the appointed ritual are excluded from the estates granted by will. How does it help to consecrate a chaste body to the public safety and to protect the eternity of your power with heavenly guards, to show character that assists your arms and your eagles, to make vows effectual in behalf of all, and not to show justice to everyone? Is there a better servitude which is the lot of men? We injure the state, to whom it has never been expedient to be ungrateful.

Let no one think that I defend this cause of religion, alone. From deeds of this sort, all troubles of the Roman race

have arisen. The law of our parents honored the Vestal virgins and the servants of the gods with a moderate living and just privileges. The integrity of this office stood even among the degenerate money-changers who turned the food of sacred purity into hire of day laborers. A public famine followed this act and a poor harvest deceived the hope of all the provinces. These are not faults of the land, let us attribute nothing to the south winds. Mildew did not harm the corn, nor did the oats fail for this. The sacrilege of the year was the cause. For it was necessary that punishment come to all men because religion was neglected. Surely, if there is any instance of such a famine, we should attribute it to the changes of the years. A very serious cause has produced this sterility. Life is prolonged by the forests and again the want of the country people flocks to the Dodonean trees. Such suffering did the provinces endure when public honor fed the servants of religion? When was the oak shaken for the use of men, when were the roots pulled up, when did fertility desert the alternating fallowness of these regions, when the yearly crops were the property alike of the people and the sacred virgins? For the living of the priests made the crops of the land more productive and was a help rather than a gift. Is there a doubt that men always gave in proportion to the supply, because now excessive poverty claims all?

Someone will say that public money should be refused for the expense of foreign religions. Let that opinion be far from my good emperors, that what at one time was given to certain ones by the state might seem to belong to the emperor's ^{private} purse. For since the state is composed of individuals, what originates from it becomes again the right of individuals. You rule all things, but preserve

the
becomes
present

for each his own. Justice has more weight with you than license. Consider your generosity and whether it wishes those things to be considered public property which you have given to others. A privilege once conferred for the honor of the city ceases to belong to those contributing, and what was kindness at first becomes a debt by custom and age. And so, an empty fear he tries to stir up in your divine mind, if anyone should assert it, that you have the consciousness of those causing unpopularity unless you have the consciousness of those removing it.

Let the secret guards of all sects look with favor on your kindness, and those, especially, which at one time aided your ancestors. Let them defend you, let us worship them. We seek that state of religion which preserved the empire for your divine parent, and which furnished legitimate heirs to a fortunate prince. That deified sire looks down from the starry arch upon the tears of the priests and thinks himself blamed, when that custom is violated which he so gladly preserved. Prefer the correction of another's plan rather than follow your deified brother, hide the deed which he did not know had displeased the senate, since it is clear that the embassy was excluded, lest it have public hearing. It is a thought of former times, that it is the duty of an emperor not to hesitate to abolish laws which never should have been made.

N O T E S

D.N. i.e. dominus noster

DDDN. i.e. domini nostri tres.

The rule of redoubling the consonant ending of a word when abbreviated, in order to represent the plural, possibly originated among the engravers, but according to Mommsen was invented by African grammarians and carried into Italy. R. Cagnat, Cours

D'Epigraphie Latine, pg. 401

Valentinian II was emperor of the west from 375-392. Theodosius reigned in the eastern empire 379-395. Arcadius was the son of Theodosius who succeeded his father in the east in 395, but he had been created Augustus in 383 when only a boy of five.

AUGGG.

Aug. is the abbreviation for Augustus, auggg for Augusti tres.

U.C. i.e. uir clarissimus

Sec. I l. 1 amplissimus

There were several distinct classes of society in the Roman State. The senatorial class was the "amplissimus ordo". Cicero always addressed the senate as "patres conscripti".

Sec. I l. 3. diu pressum dolorem

The grief which had long been endured by the senate was the action of the emperors against pagan rites, culminating in the

removal of the altar of Victory from the Curia in 382.

Sec. I 1. 4. iterum

In 382, a deputation had been sent to Gratian who refused audience. This had been intrusted to Symmachus who was banished from Rome for the offense. On three other occasions, delegations from the senate were directed to visit the emperor of the west, one on the occasion of this speech, one to Theodosius in 388, and a fourth to Valentinian in 392.

Sec. I 1. 5. divi

Divus was a frequent epithet for the deceased Roman emperors.

Sec. I. 1. 5. improbis

Ambrosius of Milan presented notes, alleged to be from senators, declaring that they were not in favor of this embassy. As the Christians formed the least numerous party in the senate, they could only express by their absence their dissent from the legal acts of a pagan majority. These notes of Ambrosius are generally conceded to have been forged.

Sec. I. 1. 6. quia erat.

In golden Latin, quia takes the indicative only when the reason is given on the authority of the writer or speaker, otherwise it takes the subjunctive. It follows the rule here.

Sec. II 1. 1. gemino officio

Symmachus was prefect of the city in 384. He also represented the emperor as Pontifex Maximus and Princeps Senatus.

Sec. II l. 3. nulla dissensio

Symmachus assumes complete unanimity of the senate which is exceedingly improbable as the Christians would not have agreed with the pagans.

Sec. II l. 5. amari ff.

An example of Symmachus's excellent flattering eloquence. Compare Paul's introduction in his speech before Agrippa.

Sec. III l. 3. pars eorum prior coluit

Up to the time of Constantine, Christianity was tolerated but pagan rites were maintained by the emperors.

Sec. III l. 6. aram Victoriae

The altar and statue of Victory had been brought by Augustus from Tarentum and placed in the Curia, the new senate house, begun by Julius Caesar and completed by Augustus. The building was dedicated in B.C. 29 and presumably the altar was placed in it at that time. Huelsen, Ch. The Roman Forum pg. 117.

Sec. III l. 8. Victoriae debet aeternitas

This is a statement probably used only for rhetorical effect as it is doubtful whether Symmachus could have proved it. But Lanciani says the statue was considered a personification of the powers and destinies of imperial Rome. Lanciani, R. Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Excavations, pg. 163.

Sec. III l. 11 colendam

In this one short relatio, there are eight instances of the gerundive and one of the gerund.

Sec. IV 1. 1. ominis vitatio

The Romans paid a great deal of attention to omens, interpreting all strange happenings as good or bad omens. They never undertook any enterprise unless the omens were favorable. Symmachus regarded the removal of the altar of Victory as a bad omen, for the statue and altar was a symbol of the Roman armies who were at the time engaged in trying to check an invasion of the Ostrogoths.

Sec. IV 1. 4. Constanti factum

In 353, Constantius II, by an edict which apparently was never executed, ordered that the temples should be shut and guarded and everyone should refrain from sacrifices. Violators would be punished by death and confiscation, and governors of the provinces would incur the same penalties if they neglected to punish offenders. "Placuit omnibus locis atque urbibus universis claudi protinus templa, et accessu vetitis omnibus licentiam delinquendi perditis abnegari. Volumus etiam cunctos a sacrificiis abstinere. Quod si quis aliquid forte huiusmodi perpetraverit, gladio sternatur: facultates etiam perempti fisco decernimus vindicari: et similiter adfligi ⁱrectores provinciarum si facinora vindicare neglexerint." Gibbon, Edward, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, edited by Bury, J. B. Vol. II, pg. 393.

Sec. V 1. 1. in leges et verba iurabimus

"in legem iurare" was the form for swearing to observe a law. "in verba iurare" was to take a prescribed form of oath. The oath of allegiance to the emperor was similar to the soldier's oath, the "sacramentum", which entitled him to carry on legitimate

warfare.

Sec. V l. 3. omnia deo plena sunt

This use of deus in the singular by such an ardent pagan and polytheist is interesting to note. Seneca, in the first century A.D. speaks of a single deity. In letter 47, he says, "Hoc qui dixerit, obliviscetur, id dominis parum non esse quod deo sat est," and also in letter 53, "Tantum sapienti sua quantum deo omnis aetas patet."

Sec V l. 7. iuratus ordo

The senators were sworn on the altar of Victory to observe the laws of the emperor and of the empire. An offering of wine and incense was the ordinary prelude to public deliberations.

Sec. VI l. 2. idem

Constantius II had removed the altar in 357. It was restored by Julian (360-363), tolerated by Valentinian I (364-375), and again removed by Gratian in 382. Eugenius who usurped the power (392-394) restored the altar, and it was removed for all time by Theodosius in 394.

Sec. VII l. 1. ff.

Constantius made a visit to Rome in 357 to indulge his pride and curiosity. His entry was like a triumphal procession. He had a splendid train and rode in a chair, gleaming with gold and gems. He was received by the magistrates and senate of Rome, and the streets were lined with people, for a sovereign had not been in the city for thirty-two years. Constantius stayed in the ancient palace of Augustus, presided over the senate, assisted at the games

of the circus, and accepted crowns and panegyrics. His visit lasted thirty days, during which he viewed all the temples and "monuments of power" and said that rumor had been inadequate in her account of Rome. Ammianus l. XVI c. 10

Sec. VII l. 2. sacrarum virginum privilegiis

The sacred virgins were the priestesses of Vesta, goddess of the hearth fire. They were chosen by lot and served for thirty years. The Vestal virgins had many special privileges such as exemption from taxes, precedence over the consul in public, exemption from taking oaths, and burial in the Forum. A criminal, when being led to punishment, was freed if he chanced to meet a virgin. Wills and documents of state were intrusted to their care.

The order of the Vestal virgins lasted eleven centuries. Eugenius, the usurper, was killed in 394; he was the last of the pagan tolerators. The atrium of the Vestals was thrown open to the public by Theodosius in 394.

This Atrium was the house of the Vestal virgins, analogous to a modern convent. Lanciani gives a detailed description of it. The house was a large, rectangular building with only one entrance. The cloisters, the atrium proper, was very large, out of all proportion to the rest of the building. It was surrounded by various compartments and there was a second story containing the bed rooms. This house is the prototype of all nunneries and convents.

Sec. VII l. 3. sacerdotia

A priest's duty was to perform rites associated with the relations between the state and the gods. All priestly offices

were held for life and special distinctions were associated with them. They were organized into various colleges or cults. Originally, only patricians held these offices, but plebians gradually were admitted.

Sec. VII l. 4. *inpensas*

Roman sacrifices would be deprived of their force and energy if they were no longer celebrated at the expense of, and in the name of the state. Gibbon, Edward, Decline and Fallof the Roman Empire. Vol. III, pg. 192.

Sec. VII l. 5. *delubra*

In the middle of the fourth century, guidebooks for the city of Rome stated that there were 424 temples, 304 shrines, 80 statues of precious metals, of gods, 64 of ivory and 3785 miscellaneous bronze statues. Lanciani, R., Pagan and Christian Rome, pg. 51.

Sec. VII l. 6. *templorum*

Roman temples were used not only as places of worship, but also as galleries and museums. The principal temples at Rome were --The Pantheon, Temple of Vesta, of Castor, of Concord, of Faustina, of Mars Ultor, of Vespasian, and of Divus Iulius.

Sec. VIII l. 1. *suus cuique mos*

A peculiarly pagan idea is the one which ascribes different gods for different places and different people. The Pantheon at Rome was a house for all the gods. It was really a liberal belief in spite of its lasting conservatism. Even in the Old Testament the idea of other gods than Jehovah is accepted. See the story of Elijah and the worshippers of Baal, I Kings, 17

and 18.

Sec. VIII l. 3. mens divina

In the 6th book of Vergil's Aeneid, line 727, Anchises, Aeneas's father says,

"mens agitat molem et magnose corpore miscet."

Sec. VIII l. 4. genii

The Romans conceived of a genius or second self accompanying every individual through life. It was regarded as a good and beneficent being. Families, societies, cities, and peoples had their own genii, also.

Sec. VIII l. 8. sequendi ff.

Symmachus was extremely conservative and yet we must have sympathy for those last ardent pagans. In their minds, the old belief of many protecting deities was necessary for the welfare of the state, and they clung to their beliefs through their patriotism.

Sec. IX l. 6. Hannibalem a moenibus

The second Punic War was waged from 218 to 201 B.C. In 211, Hannibal attempted an attack on Rome, but was unsuccessful.

Sec. IX l. 6. a Capitolio Senones

In 290 B.C. occurred an uprising against Rome on the part of the Italians to the north. The Senones, who had been allies, furnished soldiers to the Etruscans. The Romans completely annihilated the Senones in 283 B.C.

Sec. X l. 3. indigetibus

Heroes were elevated to the rank of gods after their death

and regarded as patron deities of their country.

Sec. X 1. 6. uno itinere

Seneca in his thirty-third letter to Lucilius says that truth is open to everyone -- "patet omnibus veritas".

Sec. XI 1. 2. praerogativa detracta est

By an act of Gratian in 382, food allowances for the Vestals and priests were converted to public use, legacies which were left to them were treated as property without an heir, and the freedom from taxes, which they had previously enjoyed, was removed.

Sec. XI 1. 5. vittae capiti

The Vestal virgins wore a coronet-shaped head band, a special indication of their office.

Sec. XI 1. 5. insigne

All priests had some external distinction.

Sec. XII 1. 3. fiscus

The emperor's private purse was instituted by Augustus and was controlled exclusively by the emperor. It was replenished from the revenues of the imperial provinces, unclaimed estates and confiscations. The income was used for army and navy expenditures, provision of corn, and public buildings.

Sec. XII 1. 5. avaritia ff.

Symmachus employs every opportunity of inserting a bit of flattery.

Sec. XIII 1. 1. agros

The Vestals were exceedingly wealthy, from the revenues of the order which possessed a large amount of landed property, from bequests and allowances, and from gifts from the emperors. Lanciani, R.: Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Excavations pg. 138.

Sec. XIII l. 3. *privata successio*

The Vestals could freely hold property and dispose of it. The Vaconian Law, 169 B.C. abolished female inheritance but the Vestals were not subject to the common law.

Sec. XIII l. 3. *testamenta*

By the Twelve Tables, the code of laws compiled in 451 B.C., a man could dispose of his property as he pleased even to the point of using up the inheritance of his family. Later this was regulated so that a man could not give more than three-fourths in legacies.

Harper's Classical Dictionary.

Sec. XV l. 6. *trapezitas*

This word is formed from the Greek word for table, derived from the table upon which the money-changers or bankers did their business.

Bankers existed in Rome as early as 309 B.C. They exchanged foreign money for Roman coin, kept money belonging to others, lent money, acted as agents in sales or auctions. They seem to have had a modern system of book-keeping. Wealthy bankers who carried on business on a large scale were respectable persons, but those who degraded their occupation by becoming usurers were held in contempt.

Harper's Classical Dictionary.

Sec. XV l. 8. fames

In 383, after the murder of Gratian, the harvest in the provinces was so small that it did not suffice even for the country people themselves, to say nothing of the people of Rome. Symmachus claims that this was the gods' revenge for the violation of their rites.

Sec. XVI l. 6. silvestribus arbustis

At the time of a famine, the country people would flock to the forest where there was still some vegetation, and eat roots and herbs, etc.

Sec. XVI l. 7. Dodonaeas arbores

Dodona was a city and oracle of Jupiter in Epirus. The oracle was situated in an oak or birch tree, the priestesses interpreting the god's message through the rustling of the leaves.

Sec. XVIII l. 2. alienae religionis

Since the state religion was Christianity, paganism would be considered a foreign religion.

Sec. XX l. 1. divo parenti

Valentinian II was the son of Valentinian I who had tolerated pagan worship.

Sec. XX l. 2. legitimos heredes

Gratian, the violator of paganism, had no children.

Sec. XX l. 4. divo fratri vestro

Gratian and Valentinian II were brothers. Gratian had removed the altar in 382.

Sec. XX

Note the successful endeavor to secure rhetorical effect in this closing section.

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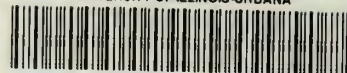
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